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ABSTRACT

This paper is primarily concerned with Basil Bernstein's sociolinguistic account of school failure. The first section describes some earlier work relevant to his theories. In the second section, Bernstein's sociolinguistic codes thesis is described, and an attempt is made to show that it suffers from the merging of two logically distinct strands in one description of a "restricted code." It is also suggested that Bernstein may have over-emphasized the importance of parental language per se in the child's cognitive development. The third section, drawing on several recently published critiques of Bernstein's work, examines the empirical evidence he relies upon when presenting his theory and argues that much of it is not clearly relevant to his theoretical statements. The fourth section discusses Bernstein's use of the codes thesis to explain working-class school failure. It argues that Bernstein's view of the school is unrealistic and, further, points to apparent contradictions existing between the account of the school he uses in his linguistic papers when discussing failure and the more realistic view he has presented elsewhere. In the last section some other theoretical approaches to the role of linguistic factors in school failure are briefly reviewed. (Author)

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Language Differences and Educational Failure

Barry Cooper

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University of Sussex Education Area Occasional Paper

LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES AND EDUCATIONAL FAILURE

With special reference to Bernstein's account of educability

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INTRODUCTION

This paper will consider the possible role of socio-linguistic factors in the production of rates of educational failure - which are, of course, correlated with measures of social class. It will concentrate on the work of Basil Bernstein since this is, at present, the most widely diffused and debated contribution in the area. It will be the main purpose of the paper to argue that the widespread acceptance of Bernstein's particular socio-linguistic account of educational failure is, at best, premature and that other possible approaches should be given more consideration - particularly those which lay less emphasis on characteristics of the child and somewhat more on the other side of the equation - the school itself.

There will be five sections. In the first some early work on language - directly relevant to Bernstein's ideas - will be described in order to lay some foundation for the ensuing discussion of Bernstein's theory. This section will also serve to show that concern with the amount taken for granted in communication is not new. (Some reference to Bernstein's ideas is made in this first section and the reader who is not familiar with them is referred to section II.) The next three sections will concentrate on Bernstein's well-known theory of socio-linguistic codes. In section II the latter will be outlined in some detail and an attempt will be made to show that the codes thesis suffers from the merging together of two logically separate strands in one description of a "restricted code". It will also be suggested that Bernstein may have overemphasized the importance of parental language per se in the cognitive development of the child. The next section (III) will review some of the empirical work Bernstein relies upon when presenting his theory and, in doing so, will draw on several recent papers criticising various aspects of Bernstein's work. Particular attention will be paid to the positivistic nature of his research techniques. It will also be argued that many of the empirical studies he relies upon are not especially relevant to what, in section II, has been described as the "functional" strand in his codes thesis. Section IV will analyse his use of the codes thesis to explain working class failure in our schools. In doing so it will look at Bernstein's account of the school. It will criticize the view of schools presented in his language papers as being unrealistic and further to this will point out the contradictions existing between the account of the school Bernstein uses in his language papers in explaining working class failure, and the more realistic view he has presented elsewhere. Section V will sketch out some other possible theoretical approaches to the problem of communication across subcultural boundaries - which might well prove to be important in the understanding of educational failure. It will briefly consider an example of the sort of empirical work - that of Barnes - that might be relevant to an assessment of the value of such theoretical frames.

I

In this section three pieces of work will be considered with the aim of demonstrating that the concern in the social sciences with problems of language, meaning and context is not a particularly new one.

The first is Malinowski's (1923) "The problem of meaning in primitive languages". As an anthropologist Malinowski was concerned with the problem of translating native utterances into such languages as English. He argued that it is impossible to establish a one-to-one correspondence between a native word and some supposedly equivalent English word with respect to their meanings. The reason for this is that the meaning of any native word cannot be grasped by an outsider unless the "context of situation" is taken into account. He stated:

> "language is essentially rooted in the reality of the culture, the tribal life and customs of a people, and ... it cannot be explained without constant reference to these broader contexts of verbal utterance. ... In a primitive language the meaning of any single word is to a very high degree dependent on its context."

This problem of context did not arise in more "civilized" languages. He claimed that, in the written form of these, "statements are set down with the purpose of being self-contained and self-explanatory." The clearest case, he argued, is that of a modern scientific book which "sets out to address every individual reader who will peruse the book and has the necessary scientific training." It is clear that Malinowski regarded this language as context-free in a sense that the native is not - and hence as superior. It must be pointed out at this early stage that in both cases a comparable cultural knowledge is required to fully understand the linguistic record - in the first case a knowledge of the culture of the native and,in the second, knowledge derived from one's membership of a certain scientific subculture. Any difference is arguably a matter of degree and is relative to the observer's perspective.

The next study to be considered is that carried out by Bossard (1943; 1945) in the U.S.A. He studied family table talk in various social strata. He found, in all the families studied, a type of language which, at the descriptive level, seems to have much in common with what Bernstein was later to call restricted code speech. Bossard said:

> "each family tends to have its own words, phrases, idioms, grimaces, signs, gestures and the like eloquent with meaning to all the family members even if somewhat unintelligible to outsiders."

He discussed both social class and education in relation to the language he recorded. On social class his statements bear a certain similarity to Bernstein's. For example:

> "families at the lower social levels seem much more figurative in their language, less rational, and less logical than other folks. ... In the higher social strata, particularly among intellectual persons, every word tends to be used more in an individual sense. Sentences consist of individual units. They can be taken apart, put together again, and combined in different ways. The distinctions and subtleties in language are emphasized."

Such a view seems very close to Bernstein's idea that the language of the lower working class is highly predictable - consisting to a large extent of ready-made stock phrases and expressions, while that of the middle class is less so.

With respect to the school, Bossard distinguished three types of language - that of the school which he termed formal; a less formal, but still "correct", version of this

which he termed informal; and an "incorrect" language termed vulgate. He went on to say, although he did not relate this to social class:

> "our records clearly identify those children who are reared in homes in which the language of the school is used, so that no linguistic difference or effort is involved in passing from one to the other. ... Similarly one sees the handicap of the child, especially the younger child, who is reared in a vulgate English using family, and who must pass back and forth constantly from school to the home. Many of these children live a kind of linguistic double life during their school years which cannot but be a handicap to their school progress."

It is of interest to note that this model locates the discontinuity between the home and the school at a lower linguistic level than Bernstein's. He emphasizes semantic differences not phonological, lexical and syntactic ones.

The last piece of work to be discussed in this section is that of Schatzman and Strauss (1955). It contains a number of ideas very similar to Bernstein's. The researchers had available to them approximately 340 transcriptions of interviews with people who had experienced a tornado in rural America. They selected, from this random sample, cases falling in extreme positions on educational and income distributions. They found striking differences between their "lower" and "upper" groups. Most of these related to the degree of context-freedom of the language the respondents had used in the interviews. They noted:

> "individuals vary in their ability to see the necessity for mediating linguistically between their own imagery and that of their listeners".

Of their "average" lower class speaker they wrote:

> "his assumption of a correspondence in imagery is notable ... often terms like 'we' and 'they' are used without clear referents. He seldom qualifies an utterance presumably because he takes for granted that his perceptions represent reality and are shared by all who were present".

The "average" middle class speaker however:

> "recognizes much more fully that imagery may be diverse and that context must be provided. Hence he uses many devices to supply context. ... He qualifies ... He expands themes ... He depends less on saying 'you know'."

The similarity of their work to Bernstein's does not end there. They also note of the lower class respondent:

> "at worst he cannot talk about categories of people or acts, because, apparently, he does not think readily in terms of classes." (i.e. logical classes.)

He may mention categories or classes:

> "but he does not otherwise spell out relations between these classes."

To use Bernstein's terms, principles are not made verbally explicit. The middle class speaker, however:

> "explicitly relates class to class. Concrete imagery ... is dwarfed or overshadowed by the prevalence and richness of conceptual terminology".

It should be clear by now that Bernstein has apparently derived much from their work.[1] Consider, for example, their finding that the lower class use "crude temporal connectives like 'then', 'and', and 'so", - this, according to the early Bernstein, is one of the properties of lower working class speech in England. Or, consider their emphasis on their finding that lower and middle class speakers use different "frames" to organize their speech. This seems directly comparable to Bernstein's views on an "orientation" and "underlying principles". Schatzman and Strauss also noted that lower class respondents were much less likely, when asked to describe human activities, to:

> "utilize motivational terminology, either explicitly or implicitly. ... To the speaker it was quite clear why people did what they did. There was no need to question or elaborate on the grounds for acts."

This can be compared with Bernstein's view that the lower working class do not use language to explore intentions and feelings. Lastly, it must be noted that, like Bernstein, these writers argue that the middle class speaker, as well as having access to a relatively context-free mode of communication, shares with the lower class speaker the ability to talk in a fashion that takes much for granted, noting that:

> "communication is often routinized, and much of it transpires between those who know each other so well or share so much in common that they need not be subtle".

It must be noted that these researchers presented their results and conclusions in a much more tentative manner than the early Bernstein tended to do. They were well aware of the possible effects of context and remarked that several of their findings might be specific to "such a semi-formal situation as the interview". Especially important is their awareness that, since the original interviewer was middle class, the lower class respondent was in a different social situation - objectively - from the middle class respondent. The former was required to communicate across significant social (class) boundaries while the latter was not. This may well have affected both their fluency and the researchers' judgement of it. The researchers note the latter possibility in their remark that:

> "presumably he (the lower class respondent) must have some stylistic controls not readily observable by a middle class reader".

The word reader is particularly important here since the speech was originally intended to be heard not read and this latter restriction of access to non-verbal cues associated with the original speech (such as surroundings, for example) may well have affected the researchers' conclusions adversely.

One other important difference between their work and that of Bernstein must also be mentioned. This relates to the reasons for the observed differences. Schatzman

and Strauss emphasize occupational differences. The middle class speaker develops his skill in formal organizational settings. They seem to believe that a lower class speaker could develop this ability to take the role of the other when speaking if he were to have extensive contact with such organizations and their associated language mode. Their model is arguably, therefore, less determinist than Bernstein's which tends to see differences in communicative competence as rooted in the differing socialization practices experienced by people during their childhood.[2]

II

This section will consider Bernstein's theoretical ideas on language and socialisation in the family. The discussion will concentrate on language use in what he terms the regulative[3] context both because this area seems central to his thesis and because it is here that his ideas are most clearly developed. The exposition of his theory to be given below is based on an attempt to extract the central ideas from the relevant papers presented by him in Volume 1 of Class, Codes and Control. Since he sees the papers as developing a central theme this seems an acceptable approach to use. As was pointed out above, Bernstein, unlike Schatzman and Strauss, attempts to explain the supposed social class differences in speech by postulating the existence of distinct forms of linguistically mediated socialization practices in different social classes. Specifically, he claims that there exist two distinct types of family with respect to the manner in which parents control their children in the regulative context. These will now be described.

In positional families, which are seen as mainly characteristic of the traditional working class, children are controlled in terms of status. The parent focuses upon "general attributes of the child, upon his age, sex, or age-relational status"[4] In person-oriented families, seen mainly as characteristic of certain sections of the middle class and possibly the geographically mobile and "affluent" section of the working class, the parent focuses upon "particular attributes of the child, those ... specific to him".[5]

Here the child is not just the incumbent of a particular status. The status arrangements are, in fact, discussed and hence the reasons for them made available to the child. Bernstein summarizes the two family types and their consequences thus:

"In positional families the child takes over and responds to the formal pattern of obligation and privilege. ... In a person-oriented family, the child's developing self is differentiated by continuous adjustment to the verbally realized and elaborated intentions, qualifications and motives of others."

He further claims:

> "it should be possible to see ... that the communication structures within these two types of family are somewhat differently focused."

The argument then proceeds as follows. Since, in a person-oriented family, control involves the making explicit of principles, reasons and motives, a qualitatively different kind of language will be used by the parent in this family than that used by a parent in the positional type. The child in a person-oriented family will, therefore, have

access to a different speech model - one which is adequate for rendering principles, reasons and motives verbally explicit. The child in the positional family will lack such experience. He hears language used rather to reinforce the present social arrangements than to explicate intents and principles - since the latter are taken for granted.

It is clear that Bernstein owes much to the ideas of certain writers in the area of child-rearing practices who have described, at a fairly high level of abstraction, differences they claim to have found between working and middle class families. For example, Kohn (1963), reporting work first published in 1959, claims to have found that:

> "working class parental values centre on conformity to external proscriptions, middle class parental values on self-direction. To working class parents, it is the overt act that matters: the child should not transgress externally imposed rules; to middle class parents it is the child's motives and feelings that matter: the child should govern himself."[6]

What Bernstein has added is the hypothesis that the different types of control exercised in positional and personal families will necessitate different kinds of language use by the parent and, furthermore, the hypothesis that the child will internalize the model(s) of speech presented to him in such a way that it will orient him to specific uses of language in his adult life - and thus restrict the modes of control available to him or her as a future parent. Some of the bases of this explanatory scheme will be considered in more detail below. The language "code"[7] (in later papers the socio-linguistic code) underlying the speech realizing control in a person-oriented family is called the elaborated code; that underlying speech realizing control in a positional family the restricted code.[8] These will now be described.

Theoretically, the elaborated code orients the child to a use of language that is context-free while the restricted code orients him to relatively context-bound speech. This means that the restricted code speaker can only communicate effectively to those with whom he shares many assumptions and meanings. The elaborated code speaker experiences no such difficulty since his speech is less tied to the here and now. The restricted code speaker is seen as finding it especially difficult to verbalize his intent. The two codes are also seen as giving access to different "orders of meaning". The restricted code gives access only to particularistic orders in which principles remain implicit and hence not open to reconsideration and change. The restricted code speaker will, therefore, tend to have a rigid worldview. The elaborated code, however, gives access to universalistic orders in which principles are made explicit and hence are open to change. This speaker will, therefore, be less rigidly tied to his worldview.

Descriptively, the codes are distinguished as follows. Across a range of contexts, the restricted code speaker, when compared with the elaborated code speaker, will tend to use more context-bound speech. He will also use less subordinate clauses to qualify, less unusual adverbs and adjectives and his sentences will be shorter and less grammatical. His speech, in terms of its vocabulary and syntax, will be more predictable.

It is important to note that Bernstein sees these differences as intimately related to the different functions[9] of speech predicated on the two codes. Because of its relation to control in person-oriented families the elaborated code must function to enable the

speaker to render intents and principles verbally explicit. The restricted code has an entirely different function. Its "major function" (and Bernstein is not arguing that this is also its cause) is "to reinforce the form of the social relationship (a warm and inclusive relationship) by restricting the verbal signalling of individuated responses". Any such signalling would be a threat to parental control in a positional family since such control is based on a shared taken for granted acceptance of a body of fixed rules - and the principles underlying them must remain implicit.

This functional view of inter-code differences is not consistently adhered to throughout Bernstein's work. In places he appears to argue rather that the crucial difference is not one of function but of the amount - other than principles - that is taken for granted in speech. The two strands in his thought are captured in the following sentence from Edwards (1974):

> "Restricted code is likely whenever shared meanings provide a wide backcloth to speech, or identification with others is emphasized at the expense of signalling individuated experience".

It is presumably on the basis of the first of these possibilities that Bernstein is able to disconnect the restricted code from its functional relation to a particular form of familial control type when arguing that the middle class have access to both it and the elaborated code since they often communicate in situations[10] in which much can be taken for granted.

These two explanations of the restricted code need to be separated since they appear to lead, theoretically, to somewhat different consequences. The functional approach can be considered first. If it is true, as Bernstein claimed until recently,[11] that certain sections of the working class have access only to a restricted code and, if the major function of this code is to reinforce a particular form of social relationship, then it can be seen to follow that the major function of speech in such sections of the working class is to reinforce a form of social relationship. Even if Bernstein is referring to latent function this is a strong theoretical statement since it carries the implication that speech, in such sections of the working class, is only secondarily important as a means of communicating individual (as against socially shared) experience.

The other approach visible in his work - especially in his discussions of empirical work - appears to recognize more centrally that these sections of the working class do use language for communicating individual experience and their responses to it, but argues that they are restricted to a form of speech which only enables them to do such communicating effectively to those with whom they share many assumptions and much background knowledge.[12] This is a similar view to that of Schatzman and Strauss who argue that the lower class take too much for granted when speaking to cultural outsiders because they lack experience in communicating with persons who do not share their assumptions and commonsense knowledge. The function of their speech is still viewed, nevertheless, as primarily that of communicating meanings to others. It can be added that there is no obvious reason why principles and reasons should not be discussed in a restricted code form of speech - in the sense of speech that assumes much knowledge to be held in common - as long as the speaker-hearers do share many basic assumptions and elements of knowledge. (This, in fact, seems to be what occurs in academic seminars where reference is often made to whole theories

by means of a single word or phrase. Such allusions obviously assume much in the way of knowledge to be held in common.) It will be argued in the next section that although Bernstein theoretically adheres primarily to a functional view of the inter-code differences most of the available empirical work is relevant only to the other, less strong, version of the thesis.

It might be worthwhile to summarize what is being said. Bernstein has apparently taken the early findings on subcultural child-rearing and value differences (e.g. Kohn) and the early findings on language differences (Bossard; Schatzman and Strauss) and formulated a theory connecting them. This has involved his assuming[13] that the different forms of control emphasized in positional and person-oriented families will necessitate the use of two qualitatively different forms of parental speech. In deciding just what the speech differences associated with positional and personal families will be, Bernstein appears to have relied on the work of Bossard and Schatzman and Strauss and then argued, after the event, that such differences are functionally related to differences in control techniques in positional and personal families. It is assumed that if one person elaborates intents and principles, and the second does not, during control in the family setting then the first will have speech like that described above as predicated on an elaborated code and the second like that predicated on a restricted code.

The other major assumption in Bernstein's theory is that the speech model presented to a child is a crucial mediating variable in his socialization - especially in that area called "moral development" by the psychologists. Now, it seems quite reasonable to hypothesize that the existence of two different family control types - if real - will result in one group of children having access to different learning experiences from the other. For example, the child in the person-oriented family would be introduced to an attitude of questioning status arrangements and rules. This might have profound effects on his consciousness - especially on the degree of rigidity of his belief system. But similar points can be derived from such work as Kohn's. Bernstein, however is not content with such an explanatory scheme. He wants to implicate language much more centrally in the "moral development" process. He argues, that since there are language differences between the social classes, and (assumption) these are functionally related to differing familial control types, it is reasonable to hypothesize that it is the speech model presented to a child that mediates the effect of the form of socialization upon consciousness. But no evidence is presented by Bernstein against the simpler view that it is the mode of control per se that causes the differential development of children's forms of consciousness through such processes as the development of either "questioning" or "accepting" orientations to rules and status arrangements.[14] The problem is basically one of deciding causal priority.. Bernstein argues in the postcript to Class, Codes and Control: vol. 1 that:

> "The basic thesis has been that forms of communication may be distinguished in terms of what is rendered implicit and what is rendered explicit. ... Implicit/explicit represented for me the extent to which principles underlying the social structuring of relevant meanings were made public and elaborated through the use of language in the process of socialization",

Now it is arguably the case that he is putting too much emphasis on the form of communication in the socialization process. It is just as likely a priori to be the case that a

particular orientation or attitude on the part of the parent is what determines whether principles are rendered implicit/explicit as it is likely to be due to his or her having a particular language code and, furthermore, that it is this orientation, not a language code, that the child internalizes. To use an analogy, the orientation of the parent is the base - the language used in expressing it merely superstructural. Bernstein writes as though the language code itself determines parental behaviour. In so far as a code of any sort exists, it might be better, as Jackson (1974) suggests, to describe it as a behaviour code rather than a linguistic or socio-linguistic one. Bernstein may well be correct in arguing that "as the emphasis changed from implicitness to explicitness then such a change ... would act selectively on the grammatical and lexical choices" of the parent. But this is not the same as the claim that it is the speech model itself rather than parental attitudes that is the crucial variable in the child's socialization. It is not clear, therefore, what grounds Bernstein has for shifting so much emphasis onto speech as a factor in "moral development".

This section has attempted to show that Bernstein's theoretical framework, at least with respect to language, is based on a number of dubious assumptions. Such assumptions are only justifiable if empirical work exists to support the theoretical structure built on them. This question will be considered next.

III

This section will have two aims. Firstly, it will make several points of methodological criticism with respect to much of the empirical work on class and language and, secondly, it will also argue that most of it is irrelevant to the "functional" strand in Bernstein's work outlined in the previous section.

The first point to be considered is whether there is adequate empirical evidence to support the belief that the difference between lower working class and middle class speech is a qualitative one. Bernstein's own early empirical work, it will be remembered, was based on a comparison of the speech, in a particular situation, of lower working class messenger boys and middle class public school sixth-formers. It might have been expected to accentuate contrasts. Nevertheless, as Coulthard (1969) has pointed out, all the differences found were only of the form of relative frequencies. Bernstein, by presenting his results in terms of averages, has obscured the fact that there exists a great deal of overlap between lower working and middle class speech with respect to the indicators used. This means, at most, that lower working class speakers use less of certain linguistic features - not at all that they do not have access to them. It is not clear that such findings tell us very much, if anything, about qualitative differences in forms of consciousness. Such empirically uncovered linguistic differences, in the light of the methodological criticisms to be advanced below, will be seen to be a very weak basis for such a far-reaching theory as Bernstein's. He might argue that such criticism ignores the fact that he was pointing to differences in language function, not merely descriptive differences but, unfortunately, most of the speech data so analysed appears to have been collected from situations emphasizing one function of speech - the "ideational".[15] If anything, it merely shows that, on average, the lower working class are less adequate in respect of this function and not at all that they use language primarily for a different function than the middle class. The latter remains a theoretical assumption.

It is necessary to consider next whether Bernstein's early results are even acceptable as representative description of lower working class speech or whether it is more likely that they are merely artefacts of his particular elicitation procedures. It will be remembered that Schatzman and Strauss emphasized the possibility that the linguistic output of their samples may have been systematically affected by the nature of the eliciting situation. The lower class sample were required to communicate across social class boundaries while the middle class was not. The task may therefore have been more difficult for the lower class speakers (given that they could not take social-class-based meanings and assumptions for granted) as well as more anxiety-provoking (if it is assumed that an interview carried out by a middle class person is more anxiety-provoking for a lower class person than for a middle class one). Bernstein, in his early empirical work seems to have ignored this difficulty. He put lower working class and middle class samples into a directed discussion group situation and then assumed, in a positivistic manner, that they were experiencing the same stimulus situation. He thus ignored the meaning of the situation to the subjects. It is possible, therefore, that any number of variables may have affected the subjects' speech other than the ability to use a "formal" as well as a "public" language that he was interested in at the time. The groups may have varied in their degree of interest in the topic (capital punishment), in their wish to impress the chairman or in their degree of familiarity with such situations - to name a few. It is somewhat ironical that in the design of an experiment set up to test a socio-linguistic hypothesis there should be shown such a lack of awareness of such factors and their possible effects on linguistic output. The same may be said of the attempt in later research by Bernstein and his colleagues (reported in Vol. 2 of Class, Codes and Control) to get at the language use of parents in socializing contexts through closed questionnaires. Apart from the very important point that such schedules are not the best way to find out how language is used in the home (e.g. because of "social desirability" effects) there is the fundamental irony that, although the theory under test assumes differences in linguistic skill between respondents, they are nevertheless asked to report verbally, and in the abstract, on their own socialization practices. This is hardly an adequate approach. What is actually needed to throw some light on the correctness or otherwise of Bernstein's theory are naturalistic studies of language use by the different social classes across contexts.[16]

Such studies are now becoming available. The best known is Labov's (1969) work in Harlem on the non-standard vernacular speech of Negroes. It will be recalled that Bernstein's theory predicts that the restricted code speaker will be oriented to a form of speech that will be unsuitable for rendering principles verbally explicit. Labov has successfully shown that lower class Negroes can, in fact, use their dialectal speech to argue logically and to make the reasons for their conclusions explicit. What is of special interest here are the methodological problems involved in such an enterprise. He too found that lower class Negro speakers, in certain situations (predominantly those characterized by large status differences between speaker and hearer), produced little coherent speech. But he eventually managed to obtain extensive, coherent and logical speech from the same Negroes by manipulating factors in the eliciting situation. Briefly, he introduced a locally-born Negro interviewer, let a friend of the interviewee be present, allowed the discussion of taboo topics, and so on. By means of such situational manipulation he created a context in which Negro speech could be recorded more nearly at its best. It is this methodological result which casts doubt on Bernstein's explanation of the observed social class differences in speech in terms of underlying codes.[17]

Labov also points to the lack of correspondence between Bernstein's theory and the sorts of findings used to support it. He argues:

> "when Bernstein describes his elaborated code in general terms it emerges as a subtle and sophisticated mode of planning utterances, achieving structural variety, taking the other person's knowledge into account, and so on. But when it comes to describing the actual differences between middle class and working class speakers, we are presented with a proliferation of 'I think', of the passive, of modals and auxiliares, of the first person pronoun, of uncommon words..."

This seems a critical point to get clear. Labov is arguing, quite reasonably, that such differences as have been found are merely "stylistic" rather than symptomatic of differences in underlying communication codes as defined by Bernstein. The latter has failed to provide adequate grounds for his assumption that such differences reflect differences in the "deep structure" of communication.[18]

It is useful to note one fact about Labov's presentation of his speech data. He shows, by means of it, that:

> "there is nothing in the vernacular which will interfere with the development of logical thought, for the logic of standard English cannot be distinguished from the logic of any other dialect of English by any test that we can find".

Now, in order to prove that non-standard Negro speech could serve to convey logical thought, he had to introduce us to several of its own grammatical rules and some specifically Negro vocabulary. Since the speech was directed originally to a Negro interviewer it is not at all odd that this should be so. Therefore there are differences in speech, at a lexical and syntactical level, between lower class Negroes and middle class whites, but even if this causes difficulties in communicating (in both directions) across social boundaries which will show up in certain simulated and real situations, it certainly does not prove that some groups primarily use language for a function other than to express individual experience. This is Bernstein's claim and Labov's work shows that the lower class Negro, at least, can use language quite adequately for this function in his own cultural context.

One last set of findings will be considered in this section. This is the work of Hawkins that Bernstein relies so heavily upon in his papers. Hawkins (1969) claims to have found that, when children were presented with a series of pictures illustrating a sequence of events and asked to tell a story about what was going on, working class and middle class children differed in their use of pronouns.[19] The working class tended towards the use of exophoric pronouns (i.e. those whose referent was in the pictures) while the middle class tended to use pronouns in a cohesive fashion (i.e. their pronouns referred to previously mentioned referents).[20] Now, it has been argued by Coulthard (1969) that the research does not in fact demonstrate such a difference adequately. For example, he points out that nothing is said about the relative lengths of the working and middle class stories. Furthermore, following a suggestion of his[21] one can work out that the ratio of exophoric to cohesive pronouns is not very different for the two groups - 25.8% for the working class, and 19.9% for the middle class. (Bernstein, when he uses the results theoretically argues as though such results support a belief in a qualitative difference in pronominal usage. This will be seen below.) This small difference in percentages may seem reason enough

to dismiss Bernstein's use of the findings as misinformed but it will be instructive to assume that the results do represent a qualitative (or, at least, a large quantitative) difference and then consider the theoretical use Bernstein makes of them. He presents them in several places as follows (e.g. 1973).

> "Consider the two following stories which P. Hawkins ... constructed as a result of his analysis of speech of middle class and working class five-year-old children. The children were given a series of four pictures which told a story and they were invited to tell the story. Here are the stories:
>
> 1. Three boys are playing football and one boy kicks the ball and it goes through the window the ball breaks the window and the boys are looking at it and a man comes out and shouts at them because they've broken the window so they run away and then that lady looks out of her window and she tells the boys off.
>
> 2. They're playing football and he kicks it and it goes through there it breaks the window and they're looking at it and he comes out and shouts at them because they've broken it so they run away and then she looks out and she tells them off.
>
> With the first story the reader does not have to have the four pictures which were used as the basis for the story, whereas in the case of the second story the reader would require the initial pictures in order to make sense of the story".

(It is important to note that the stories were "constructed", as Hawkins (1969) admits, to be "slightly exaggerated".) Bernstein is arguing that the working class speech (the second story) is more context-dependent. This is, on the basis of the presentation of the two stories without the pictures, apparently true but, as has been pointed out now several times by various workers, the pictures were available to the interviewer and hence the working class speech might be considered both efficient and economical. Furthermore, it is not obviously the case that the middle class speech is, in any absolute sense, context-free. It is tied to a context - the linguistic one of previous and future utterances. The difference in the two stories as presented is in the type of context relied upon with the working class making greater use of reference to extra-linguistic context-i.e. the pictures. In fact, in the light of the above remarks about the small degree of difference in the relative use of the two types of pronoun, and hence, therefore of reliance on the two types of context, it can be seen that both groups of children used speech that was dependent on both sorts of context. And, as Edwards (1974) notes:

> "speech can be both context-dependent and fully effective as communication".

There are three things that must be noted about this study in the light of Bernstein's interpretation of its results. Firstly, it is concerned primarily with pronoun usage in narrative and descriptive tasks - aspects of the ideational function of language - and hence can throw little light on Bernstein's more profound claims about principles being rendered implicit/explicit in speech. It bears no relation, moreover, to his view that certain sections of the working class use language primarily for the function of reinforcing a particular form of social relationship. Secondly, and on a lower level of abstraction, it fails even to show that working class speech is more context-dependent than middle class speech when being used "ideationally". This is simply because the interviewer could see, and the child knew he could see, the pictures. Thirdly, Bernstein's

use of its findings (or, at least, an idealized version of them) illustrates yet again the way he moves from overlapping distributions of results to the discussion of qualitative differences without any apparent awareness of the dangers of the practice.

There is one other study in particular that might have been considered here - that of Bernstein and Henderson (1969). This claims to show how parents in different social classes use language in different ways during the socialization of their children. However, the bulk of the article consists of theoretical speculation based on the responses of mothers to closed schedules and it ignores, again, the problem of overlap by presenting averages. For these reasons it is not thought here that it can be considered an adequate source of empirical support for Bernstein's theorizing.

It is hoped that the above discussion has shown both that Bernstein's interpretation of his empirical findings in terms of codes is far from obviously valid - for various methodological reasons - and that the findings tend, anyway, to be irrelevant to the main "functional" body of his theory. Labov's results, moreover, cast doubt on the correctness of the less strong version of his thesis which states that certain sections of the working class can only use language ideationally in a restricted way. The next section will consider his arguments on educability.

IV

This section will consider the now widely accepted argument that it is because of their being tied to a restricted code that the lower working or working class (depending on the particular writer) fail in schools. It is first necessary to point out that in section II, for the sake of simplicity, it was the use of language in a regulative context that was considered. Bernstein's thesis is also intended to apply to the use of language in an instructional context. For example, in teaching her child how to play a game, a mother can emphasize, and make verbally explicit, principles or, alternately, emphasize standardized context-tied operations. Language use is again seen as the factor mediating between such differences and their effect(s) on the child. Furthermore, Bernstein claims that it is the middle class mother who emphasizes principles and the lower working class mother who emphasizes context-tied operations. His evidence for this is flimsy and questionnaire derived (e.g. Bernstein and Henderson 1969). This part of the thesis refers to "object" codes while that part discussed earlier refers to "person" codes.

The form of the argument with respect to "educability"[22] must be outlined. It is as follows. The school is an institution predicated on an elaborated code. The orders of meaning institutionalized in schools are, therefore, universalistic. To succeed a child needs a code that will grant him access to such orders and the restricted code, by definition, will not. It is the fact that, according to Bernstein, certain sections of the working class have access to only a restricted code[11] that explains their failure at school relative to the middle class. This paper, so far, has tried to show that Bernstein has not obtained adequate empirical support for his views on language and socialization in the family. It will now question his view of the school. It will be argued that his explanation of "educability", having been focused on the family, has contained an unrealistic view of the school. Furthermore, it is not simply a case of his having left the school side of the analysis unexamined - in a series of papers on the school itself he presents a view of its past and present condition directly at odds with the view implicit in his language papers.

It is worthwhile considering the view of the school presented in his earliest work (1958; in Bernstein 1973). He views it there as a middle class institution and a number of things, for him, follow from this. For example:

> "the school is an institution where every item in the present is finely linked to a distant future, consequently there is not a serious clash of expectations between the school and the middle class child".

This statement rests on the view that it is a feature of middle class children that they can defer gratification (and, implicitly, of working class children that they cannot). In fact, there is good reason to believe that the middle class child need not be so oriented in order to regard school as a "good thing". It is well known that, for various reasons, the middle class child is more likely to receive immediate rewards in the school in terms of teacher praise, stream placement, examination positions, and so on. Bernstein's statement also ignores the possible meanings of school to the different social classes. Keddie (1971), for example, has argued that education may be seen - accurately - as linked to their future vocational success or failure by middle class children. She points out particularly that the aim of fostering independent inquiry in the humanities curriculum she studied might be relevant for those going on to higher education but that the working class child might, quite reasonably, not see its relevance to his likely future occupational experience. It can be seen then that Bernstein, from the very beginning, in his language papers, has taken a particular model of the school (and of pupils' relations to it) for granted. He has not examined the presuppositions involved in this.

His 1969 view (Bernstein and Henderson 1969) might be considered representative of his later opinion - at least, as expressed in his language papers. He states:

> "the school is necessarily concerned with the transmission and development of universalistic orders of meaning. The school is concerned with the making explicit and elaborating through language, principles and operations as these apply to objects (the science subjects) and persons (the arts subjects)".[23]

Only an analysis of the school, as it actually exists, will reveal the adequacy or otherwise of such a view. A brief discussion of its adequacy will now be given here under the implicit headings of social control and pedagogy.

As we have seen, the way in which parents control their children is a central variable in Bernstein's theory. With respect to control, positional families are associated with the restricted code and personal families with the elaborated code. It might, therefore, be expected that in a school "predicated upon elaborated code", forms of social control of the sort associated with the person-oriented family would predominate. Arguably, there is no good reason to believe that this is or has been, generally, the case. Teachers tend[24] to use either the imperative mode of control (e.g. "Shut up, will you!" or "Do as you're told!") or the positional mode (e.g. You're behaving like a C stream" or "Children are not allowed in there at lunchtime"). This latter form of control implicitly, and often explicitly, is dependent on the relative positions or statuses of controller and controlled. It has little to do with the verbal exploration of individual intent between equals. It is probably rarely the case that a teacher in a formal classroom situation with 30 children - especially lower working class children - has either the time or the inclination to go into elaborate reasoning as to why a child

should not talk while he is talking. At the very least, the question of whether the forms of control used in schools are more like those of the positional or personal family is an empirical one. On the basis of the available evidence, it appears unlikely that the working class child, if he is from a positional family, will have any difficulty in understanding the demands of a teacher in the area of discipline.[25]

The question of pedagogy must now be considered. The implication of its being based on an elaborated code are fairly clear. Subjects would be taught in such a way that their underlying conceptual bases would be emphasized. The content of the curriculum would consist of principles rather than facts. Examinations would assess the extent to which pupils had grasped principles rather than had learnt facts. The emphasis would certainly not be on rote-learning. It is not clear that this is what actually occurs in the average school.[26] One has only to consider the extent to which history is note-taking, maths the learning of formulae, and so on. Arguably,[27] therefore, it is context-tied operations and derivations that are taught in schools generally and it is not clear why the child with a restricted code (which orients him to such learning) should be at a disadvantage because of his code.

This discussion has certainly not shown conclusively that schools are not predicated upon an elaborated code in Bernstein's sense. Such a task cannot be attempted here but, since Bernstein presents no evidence for his view that they "necessarily" are,it should serve to raise some doubts about his explanation of lower working class failure.[28] Careful and specific empirical work needs to be done to answer the sorts of questions raised about predominant modes of control and pedagogies in schools.

The rest of this section will consider the theoretical model of the school (as far as it is relevant to present concerns) that Bernstein has advanced in three papers not concerned with his language thesis: Bernstein (1966; 1967; 1971). It will show that there exists a major contradiction between this model and his explanation of "educability" outlined above.

Each of the three papers describes changes that Bernstein believes are taking place in the organization of the school. Modes of control can be considered first. In the earliest paper the school is conceptualized as moving from a "stratified" to a "differentiated" type. The main difference is in the form of control exercised. In the former, control is based on ritual, a form of restricted code, and hence the values transmitted are not open to questioning by the pupil. In the latter the form of control is qualitatively different. Here:

> "the expressive culture ... (is) ... transmitted through a common system where the meanings are verbally elaborated, less predictable and therefore more individualized".

A similar concern is apparent in the second paper. He states:

> "In secondary schools there has been a move away from the transmission of common values through a ritual order and control based upon position or status, to more personalized forms of control where teachers and taught confront each other as individuals."

The third paper discusses a move from "inter-positional" to "inter-personal" forms of control. It is clear that with respect to control Bernstein is arguing that there exists a trend away from these forms associated with a restricted code in his language theory to those associated with his elaborated code. Yet he argues that such changes have, as yet, occurred only, or at least primarily, at the level of ideology. It can only be concluded that, as far as social control is concerned, the school is predicated on a restricted code - according to Bernstein's own views as expressed in these papers.[29]

Changes in pedagogy must now be considered. In the second paper Bernstein argues:

> "there is a shift - from pedagogy which, for the majority of secondary school pupils, was concerned with the learning of standard operations tied to specific contexts - to a pedagogy which emphasizes the exploration of principles."

In the third paper - concerned with the change from a collection type curriculum to an integrated type - similar statements are to be found. Under a collection code the emphasis is on "states of knowledge" rather than "ways of knowing"; the young are socialized into assigned principles and routine operations and derivations. And:

> "the deep structure of a collection code is strong boundary maintenance creating control from within through the formation of specific identities."

This last statement could quite easily be one describing the "deep structure" of the positional family - it is clearly related to an underlying restricted code.[30] According to this third paper it is only with the institutionalization of an integrated type curriculum that features earlier associated with an elaborated code will appear in schools. Again it is stated that the changes described are occurring, at present, mainly at the level of ideology. This means that, according to Bernstein's view, in these three papers at least, the pedagogy of the school is based on an underlying restricted code - not an elaborated code as is argued in the language papers. It is difficult to reconcile the above conclusions with either his 1969 view that the school is necessarily concerned with universalistic orders of meaning or his 1973 view that the "schools are predicated upon elaborated code and its system of social relationships".

This section, which has attempted to show that, whatever the main reason for the relative failure of working class children in our schools up until now, it is unlikely to have been the result of their having been limited to a restricted communication code, will end the discussion of the work of Bernstein on language. The next and last section will consider other explanations of the role of linguistic factors in influencing rates of educational success and failure.

V

This section will describe alternative perspectives to Bernstein's on the role of language in producing rates of educational success and failure. It will concentrate on the ideational function of language because this seems most relevant to problems of learning per se. Before discussing this however, it will briefly consider the importance of language as a marker of social identity. It must be noted, of course, that, in any actual communicative situation, an utterance can serve several functions simultaneously.

In a society divided by social class there usually exist - correlated with class - phonological, lexical and syntactical differences.[31] It is clear that speakers use such differences to make claims about their own particular class membership and to judge others' claims. As Halliday (1969) has noted:

> "language is used to define and consolidate the group, to include and exclude, showing who is 'one of us' and who is not".

It might be expected, therefore, that some teachers may, by continually "correcting" a child's native speech, alienate him from the school. Creber (1972) has claimed:

> "it does not take long to reduce children to silence or to a subversive retreat into their own language. If interruption and sarcasm are not enough, the major weapon - disapproval of the child's own language - will complete the job, for this effectively undermines his confidence and shows that you don't much care for him, his friends nor anything that is his."

What is clearly needed here is empirical work aimed at discovering both whether such processes and their suggested results actually occur and, if so, how general they are.

Before going on to discuss the ideational use of language in schools, some general theoretical ideas will be introduced. The main one is the notion of "indexical expressions". The term is Bar-Hillel's (1955) but the ethnomethodologists have made extensive use of it. Bar-Hillel set out to distinguish sentences from one another on the basis of their dependence on "pragmatic context" - i.e. who made the statement and when and where. He used the following sentences as examples:

(1) Ice floats on water
(2) It's raining
(3) I am hungry

He points out that (1) will "be understood by almost every grown-up normal Englishman to refer to the same state of affairs" while (2) "will be fully grasped only by those people who know the place and time of its production" and (3) only by those who have "the knowledge of its producer and the time of its production". This illustrates his contention that:

> "even very superficial investigation into the linguistic habits of users of ordinary language will reveal that there are strong variations in the degree of dependence of the reference of linguistic expressions on the pragmatic context of their productions".

He used the term "indexicality" to refer to this variation. One expression is to be considered more indexical than another if it is more dependent on pragmatic context for its understanding.

In this form the notion of indexicality is not particularly useful here. Cicourel's (1973) extension of it must be considered. He argues:

> "the significance of conversational or written indexical expressions ... cannot be stated as merely a problem in pragmatic context; rather it requires some reference

> to the role of "what everyone knows" in deciding the indexicality of an utterance or some part of the utterance. ... The necessity of indexical expressions in ordinary language usage is essential because different utterances presume differentially distributed common knowledge. The general significance of indexical expressions is, therefore, to be found in their use by members for locating speech and non-oral communication within a larger context of meaning by instructing a speaker-hearer to link an expression to the clock-time, the type of occasion in which it occurred, the speaker and relevant biographical information about him, the place, the intentions of the speaker, and the kinds of presumed common or special knowledge required for endowing the expression with obvious and subtle meaning. ... Logical, mathematical or scientific constructions, despite monitoring to eliminate contradictions, are like everyday expressions because they presume that the reader or speaker-hearer has been socialized to the utterances produced and can be counted on to assign them specific rule-governed meanings."

In these remarks Cicourel draws our attention to the large number of reasons there might be for a person's failure to understand an utterance (although that was not his intention). His emphasis (and this is where he has improved on Bar-Hillel) on the differential social distribution of special knowledge is especially interesting. (It is in the light of this that Malinowski's belief in the superiority of scientific language can be questioned.) Barnes' work, to be considered below, will show its relevance to our concerns. Hymes (1971) has also captured the same sort of idea in his remarks on "socio-linguistic interference" - although here it is specifically socio-linguistic knowledge that is considered crucial in misunderstanding. He writes:

> "when a child from one developmental matrix enters a situation in which the communicative expectations are defined in terms of another, misperception and misanalysis may occur at every level. As is well known, words may be misunderstood because of differences in phonological systems; sentences may be misunderstood because of differences in grammatical systems; intents, too, and innate abilities, may be misevaluated because of differences of systems for the use of language and for the import of its use (as against other modalities)."[32]

It is important to distinguish the various levels of analysis which might be used in any study of linguistic variables and their relation to school success and failure. The first three are clear cut. A child may experience communicative difficulties in the classroom because his speech differs phonologically from the teacher's, because he uses different syntactical rules, or because he lacks necessary items of vocabulary. The fourth level to be considered is the semantic. Here there are two obvious possibilities. The first is that pointed to by Bernstein - that the school requires the child to be able to relate to "universalistic" orders of meaning and some children cannot. The earlier sections were intended to cast doubt on the validity of such a view. The second is pointed to by Cicourel's discussion of indexicality. This is that a teacher may use expressions which implicitly assume that the child has access to certain knowledge that, in fact, he does not possess. This approach overlaps with the first three levels in so far as some of this knowledge may be linguistic. Some relevant empirical work will now be considered.

Cicourel himself (1973) has produced a transcript of an elementary school lesson that shows up the sort of problem that a teacher's use of language can present to children who are trying to follow a lesson. The teacher starts the session by saying,

"All right, let's take our green crayon and make a line at the bottom of the paper" Cicourell notes that she does not put the remark into any wider context by outlining the purpose of the lesson first. He adds:

> "the teacher's opening line says to use the green crayon to make a line at the bottom of the page and her remark seems fairly obvious, but the children did not automatically pick up their crayons and begin drawing the line. They looked at the teacher and at each others' paper (in some cases) before commencing the activity. Although the children did not seem to object to different terms used by the teacher like 'make a line' or 'bottom of your page', the ambiguity of the instruction was not clarified. Should the line be horizontal? Or vertical? And where is the bottom of the page?"

It will be noted that the teacher's opening remark is context-dependent in the sense that her own drawing will be required by the pupils if they are to fully understand her instructions.

Barnes (1969) has also produced relevant work. He studied (with the help of teachers on a course) language use in the first and second years of secondary schools. He concluded that some teachers, especially those in the grammar school studied,[33] relied too heavily on the use of undefined technical terms when teaching their subjects to these forms. This finding represents another way in which children might experience difficulty with language irrespective of such factors as their degree of orientation to the making of principles verbally explicit. It is an example of the problem hinted at by Cicourel in his remarks on scientific expressions. They are indexical precisely because they assume knowledge (in Barnes' findings, of subject terminology) which is specific to a particular subculture. In the light of Keddie's (1971) remarks it might further be suggested that, for "vocational" reasons, working class children may have less motivation than middle class children to learn the required terminology. Middle class children, that is, may well see themselves as potential future scientists, mathematicians, and so on, in a way that working class children do not.

Another of Barnes' findings is more clearly relatable to social class. He identified in his study a linguistic register he termed "the language of secondary education". He describes this as follows:

> "the register referred to has much in common with the language of textbooks, of official publications, of almost any printed document that sets out to discuss a topic in an impersonal public way".

With respect to this register he notes that teachers tend to use many terms, that, while not specialist, are not likely to be familiar to the pupils as part of the language of everyday life. He argues that many teachers are apparently unaware of the extra problems the use of such terms may cause their pupils. Describing one teacher observed, Barnes states:

> "in trying to explain 'city states' the teacher seems unable to escape from language equally unfamiliar to children: 'complete in themselves', 'ruled by themselves', 'supported themselves', 'communicate', 'tended to be'. City states is typical of the kinds of concepts which teachers are enough aware of to 'present' to pupils; the other phrases examplify the language of secondary education, which this teacher was so unaware of that he used it to explain the former. ... In learning

> such essential concepts as 'tendency', which form part of no specialism, the child is given no support from school, which tacitly assumes that he comprehends them. Children whose home life does not support such language learning may feel themselves to be excluded from the conversation in the classroom".

Barnes[34] is explaining the communicative difficulties experienced by some children in terms of a lower level - the lexical - than Bernstein. His "language of secondary education" is similar to Bossard's "formal" language described briefly in section I.

The work of one other writer interested in this area will be considered. Bourdieu (1966) approaches the fact of massive working class and, in terms of the prestige institutions of French education, lower middle class failure with a theoretical concept of cultural capital. The latter the child owes to his particular family of origin. He goes on to argue:

> "to penalize the underprivileged and favour the most privileged, the school has only to neglect, in its teaching methods and techniques and its criteria when making academic judgements, to take into account the cultural inequalities between children of different social classes".

This is because of the different amounts of cultural capital - which is measured against the yardstick of an aristocratic and academic culture - they already possess. When it comes to specifying the exact nature of this differentially distributed knowledge he has so far focused on language. He argues:

> "By acting as if the language of teaching, full of allusions and shared understanding, was 'natural' for 'intelligent' and 'gifted' pupils, teachers need not trouble to make any technical checks on their handling of language and the student's understanding of it, and can also see as strictly fair academic judgements which in fact perpetuate cultural privilege. ... Apart from a lexis and a syntax, every individual inherits from his milieu a certain attitude towards words and their use which prepares him, to a greater or lesser extent, for the scholastic games which are still to some extent, in the French tradition of literary studies, games with words."

He specifically points to the importance of oral examinations at certain points in the French system. In these the examiners are looking for evidence of a 'natural' gift - called 'ease' - which Bourdieu argues is, in fact, a social gift - being the product of elite socialization practices. It can be noted that in his remarks on shared understanding Bourdieu is arguing that it is the language of the teacher, not that of the pupil, that takes too much for granted.

This section has tried to show that there are other ways of examining the possible role of language in pupils' alienation from and failure in schools than Bernstein's. It may be that his emphasis on such high level dichotomies as universalistic/particularistic is unnecessary. The vocabulary and syntax of the teacher (and textbooks, etc.) may be much more important. An incident from my own teaching experience will suffice to end the section. I found that the majority of a "good" first year class could not complete a problem in maths that, on the basis of their past performance, they should have found easy. The reason turned out to be that the Schools Mathematics Project texts they were using (developed originally in a group of public and Direct Grant schools) had used the word "amend" to convey the meaning "correct". The question

that demands an empirical answer before explanations of failure[35] in socio-linguistic terms can be advanced is how common are such incidents and how many go unnoticed with the result that a child[36] may experience cumulative difficulties with school learning. It is also necessary to consider empirically variables such as social class in relation to such incidents if light is to be thrown on the correctness or otherwise of theories like Bourdieu's.

CONCLUSION

Rather than attempt to precis what has already been discussed at some length, an attempt will be made here to situate some of the theoretical positions considered earlier within the current debate on "cultural deficit" or "cultural deprivation" explanations of educational failure. It is the essence of the latter forms of explanation that they seek accounts of education failure in the nature of the child (in terms of such characteristics as I.Q., achievement motivation, etc.) without paying adequate attention to the nature of both what the child fails at and the institutional setting within which his failure occurs. Now, it will be argued here that, whatever Bernstein now claims, his work on language has been concerned to demonstrate a deficit in the working class child. He has used terms like "culturally induced backwardness" to describe the effects on cognition of a restricted code. It is true that his account of educational failure has concerned itself with the nature of the school - in terms of its being predicated on an elaborated code and concerned with universalistic orders of meaning. However, as was pointed out in section IV, the picture of the school presented in the language papers is somewhat unrealistic. It suffers from Bernstein's apparent willingness to accept that what actually occurs in schools is consonant with the public rhetoric of educational practitioners. It is also true that in another series of papers (now readily available as volume three of Class, Codes and Control) he has developed an analysis of the school that is both relevant to his codes thesis and much more realistic, but it is only recently that he has publicly tied this analysis to his socio-linguistic theory (in Bernstein, 1975a). Rosen (1972), in criticising Bernstein, wrote:

> "a thorough attempt to analyse the relationship between class and language would require us to examine the relationship of the dominant culture of our society to the culture of the dominated".

It is this latter relationship that Bernstein failed to pay adequate attention to in developing his socio-linguistic thesis. The more recent papers, "On the classification and framing of educational knowledge" and "Class and pedagogies: visible and invisible", both insightful and stimulating, are a welcome step in the direction of such an analysis in that they both centrally recognize the need to consider, in some detail, the structure of the distribution of types of school curricula and pedagogies in relation to the class structure of their wider societal setting. In the introduction to the volume containing these papers Bernstein has recognized the influence of Bourdieu's work on the educational system in France. It is Bourdieu, all of whose work benefits from his having tried to relate the discussion of educational and cultural events to the wider social structure (see e.g. Kennett, 1973), who has shown us how we might move away from notions of deficit in this area. He has, by introducing the central sociological concepts of power and domination, been able to attempt an explanation of working class "failure" in terms of the relations existing between the culture of the child, academic culture, upper class culture, and (the legitimation of) the class structure. It is in this direction that a sociology of the role of language differences in the production of rates of "failure" must now advance.

NOTES

1. Bernstein does refer briefly to their work (and to that of Bossard) in the first volume of Class, Codes and Control.

2. Bernstein does draw our attention to four critical socializing contexts in the first volume of Class, Codes and Control. These are the family, the peer group, school and work. However, as Rosen (1972) has pointed out, he focuses his attention on only the family.

3. This is defined as follows: "these are authority relationships where the child is made aware of the rules of the moral order and their various backings". The other contexts he defines are the instructional, the imaginative, and the interpersonal.

4. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes are from Class, Codes and Control: Vol. 1.

5. Bernstein in fact states that these family types cross-cut social class to some extent. For a detailed discussion of the relation of these types to social class as Bernstein sees it the reader is referred to Class, Codes and Control: 1, pp 185-189.

6. There will be no space here to criticize such findings. Many of the points of criticism to be made in section III in relation to empirical studies of class and language also apply to the child-rearing studies. Their use of questionnaires and the presentation of their results as averages are particularly vulnerable.

7. It must be noted that Bernstein distinguishes "object" and "person" codes thus: "it is possible to distinguish two modes of an elaborated code. One mode facilitates relations between persons and the second facilitates relations between objects" (quoted in Coulthard, 1969). This section will concentrate on the person code.

8. It must be pointed out that in presenting this aspect of Bernstein's theory I have somewhat oversimplified it. Bernstein in fact uses the terms positional and person-oriented in two ways - to describe family role systems and to describe modes of control. Although the uses overlap to some extent, it must be made clear that it is the positional family that Bernstein associates with a restricted code and the person-oriented family with an elaborated code. The positional mode of control per se can be realized through either a restricted or an elaborated code. The same applies to the person-oriented mode of control. It is only the third mode of control (imperative) that Bernstein unambiguously associates with one code - the restricted. For details of the rather complex relationships between family types, control types and codes the reader is referred to Class, Codes and Control: 1, pp 176-185. It will be useful to note here, with reference to section IV of this paper where control in the school is discussed in Bernstein's terms, that positional control, when realized through a restricted code, is likely, according to Bernstein, to be associated with the frequent use of imperative control.

9. For example, Halliday (1969) argues that "the child who, in Bernstein's terms, has only a restricted code is one who is deficient in respect of the set of linguistic models that we have outlined above, because some of the functions of language have not been accessible to him".

10. Consider, for example, Bossard's intra-familial talk discussed in section 1.

11. It must be noted that Bernstein has become less and less willing to make statements relating codes and class. In 1965 he wrote:

> "it is considered that the normative systems associated with the middle-class and associated strata are likely to give rise to the modes of an elaborated code, whilst those associated with some sections of the working class are likely to create individuals limited to a restricted code".

In 1971:

> "Thus we can expect, broadly speaking, to find both modes of an elaborated code within the middle class together with restricted codes. In the lower working class we could expect to find a high proportion of families limited to a restricted code. We might further expect that upwardly mobile working class children would move toward the object rather than the person mode of the elaborated code".

In 1973:

> "I have indicated that access to the roles and thus to the codes is broadly related to social class".

He has come to argue that the working class may have access to an elaborated code in certain contexts. He has also distinguished code from variant by using the notion of context. The reader is referred to the later papers in Class, Codes and Control: 1 for details. It is not felt that these extensions of Bernstein's theory affect the argument of this paper. Indeed in a paper published in 1975, on "Class and Pedagogies", Bernstein is still associating codes and class fairly explicitly, e.g. (discussing "invisible" pedagogy): "because it originates within the middle class, it pre-supposes a communication code (an elaborated code) which orients the child early towards the significance of relatively context independent meanings... "Furthermore, in the introduction to volume 3 of Class, Codes and Control (1975b), Bernstein states: "... working class children, especially lower working class children relative to middle class children, are crucially disadvantaged, given the way class relationships affect both the family and the school... ... the code which facilitates the systematic examination of, and change in, the boundaries of experience is not initially made available to the children as an essential part of their socialization within the family".

12. The question as to which, if either, approach is correct will have to be answered from empirical research. The aim here is merely to suggest the different theoretical consequences of each.

13. This assumption is now argued for on the basis of such theoretical work as that of the linguist Halliday (1969) who, for example, states: "It is clear that language serves a wide range of human needs, and the richness and variety of its functions is reflected in the nature of language itself".

14. It might be thought that this point ignores the contribution of Whorf to the debate on language and thought. Bernstein does claim to be influenced by him. But it must be pointed out that Whorf (1941) claimed that differences in grammatical systems across cultures (e.g. the lack of a developed tense system in Hopi speech) affected habitual thought patterns. Bernstein, however, explicitly says that he is not talking about differences in underlying grammatical systems or competence but of differences in the use of them in communicative situations. It is not obvious, therefore, that his thesis can claim much support from the ideas of Whorf.

15. Halliday (1970) defines this as the use of language to express content. In Bernstein's early experiments subjects discussed capital punishment.

16. Rosen (1972) has argued for the importance of the "workplace" as one such central context. More generally, he argues, that in Bernstein's theory:

> "no attention is paid to that vast area of critical working class experience, the encounter with exploitation at the place of work and the response to it; nor to the ways which take workers beyond the "particularistic" circumstances of day-to-day work experience and move them on to explore the theory and practice of how to change society".

17. It must be remarked that whether Labov's substantial findings on the ability of Negroes to reason logically and explicitly casts doubt on Bernstein's general theory depends, to some extent, upon whether lower class Negro families are considered to be of a positional or personal type.

18. Coulthard (1969) makes a number of similar points about the irrelevance of many of the indicators used by Bernstein (especially hesitation phenomena) to the theory under test. Unfortunately there is not space here to discuss these in the required detail.

19. For present purposes criticism of the Labov variety are being laid aside.

20. The general definition of these terms is as follows. Cohesive pronouns refer to "something already, or about to be, mentioned". Exophoric refer to "something in the environment of the speaker". (Hasan - quoted in Coulthard, 1969).

21. Coulthard, in fact, gives the ratio of exophoric to cohesive for another of Hawkin's tasks - that of describing some paintings by Trotin. The figures are 47.8% (working class) and 41.3% (middle class). This is again a small difference.

22. Obviously any criticism of the codes thesis itself is also, implicitly, a criticism of Bernstein's explanation of "educability". This aspect has been covered in the last two sections. Here it is his model of the school that will be concentrated on.

23. This statement also occurs in Class, Codes and Control: Vol. 1, pp221.

24. When this paper was first written this statement was based mainly on my personal observation, as an ordinary teacher, in a large urban comprehensive school. There was also much in the literature on schools that seemed to support it e.g. see Hargreaves (1967), esp. chp. 5, and Lacey (1970), esp. chp. 8. Since then I have been engaged in research in another comprehensive school. My observation there has led me to the conclusion that both control and pedagogy are realized through restricted codes in Bernstein's terms. See note 29 below.

25. Two other features of control messages in schools bring Bernstein's restricted, not elaborated, code to mind. These are (i) the importance of non-verbal channels such as gesture, facial expression, and so on, and (ii) the amount that is taken for granted in such messages. For example, a teacher may merely say "There's a lot of noise in here" (apparently a purely descriptive sentence) but mean, and be understood to mean, "Be quiet," Such sentences rely heavily on the existence of shared understandings in the classroom.

26. This whole section is more obviously applicable to the secondary school than the primary school. If more space was available it would be necessary to consider the two cases separately. I suspect, however, that the "progressive"

revolution in the primary schools has not gone so far as certain leader writers seem to think.

27. It is realized that empirical evidence is required to prove this point. Much is available in the literature. For example, see Barnes (1969) or the appendix to Rosen (1972). But again personal observation is being heavily relied upon. It might especially be pointed out that many new curricular (e.g. "modern" maths) are often taught, contrary to their stated objectives, in a way that does not emphasize principles or "ways of knowing". This presumably has a lot to do with the present form of external examinations as well as the fact that teaching rote is easier, in many respects, than teaching in an inquiry-centred manner.

28. Rosen (1972) has noted another difficulty with Bernstein's account of educational success and failure. He has pointed out that Bernstein has failed to consider the different fractions of the working class and middle class in adequate detail. Is Bernstein claiming, that is, that the language of a professor is the same as that of a bureaucrat?

29. There is one other possible interpretation. Bernstein has argued (see note 8 above) that positional control can be realized by either a restricted or an elaborated code. He has added, however, that when realized by a restricted code it will be associated with frequent recourse to imperative control. I can only say here, in support of my interpretation in this section, that in research I have been carrying out in a comprehensive school, imperative control utterances have been found to form nearly 80% of all control utterances recorded. The majority of the remainder were positional. Certainly, therefore, in this school, control is positional and realized through a restricted code. (Observation was restricted to the second year forms).

30. This sentence may need some expansion. In his later papers Bernstein has described the family types in terms of the strengths of "boundary maintaining procedures". In these terms the positional family is described thus:

> "Where boundary procedures are strong, the differentiation of members and the authority structure is based upon clear-cut, unambiguous definitions of the status of the member of the family. The boundaries between the statuses are strong, and the social identities of the members very much a function of their age, sex and age-relation status".

It is in terms of the strength of boundary maintaining procedures that the deep structure of the positional family is similar to the deep structure of a collection code.

31. See, for example, Labov (1970) on phonological variation in New York city.

32. Examples may be found in the section on the trial of Gaston Dominici in Barthes' (1973) Mythologies and in Creber (1972), p16. Hymes' paradigm is ideal for a study of the problems immigrants may experience in our schools. One wonders what light it might throw on the large number of West Indian children who are being labelled E.S.N. at present.

33. It might be that the grammar school teachers contained more subject specialists than the others studied.

34. One criticism that might be made of Barnes' work is that he did not get his estimates of the difficulty of words and concepts from the pupils. He seems to have relied on commonsense.

35. It is realized that many factors apart from linguistic ones are involved in the production of school failure. The formation of anti-groups is an obvious example. This discussion has had to concentrate on the possible role of socio-linguistic ones for reasons of space.

36. Especially if his parents are unable to provide extra help because of their lack of knowledge of terminology, etc.

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